H A R A M B E E

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION
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*officer-elect

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION
CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right rather than at the expense of any other ethnic group. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural excange is germane to human growth.

MALCOLM AFTER MECCA

During these past couple of years, there has been a resurgence of words and activity, on the part of African people in the U.S., tied to the memory of Malcolm X and his ideas. This is a positive development. At a time when African people in this country are suffering from serious economic vulnerability, when youthful African males are at such risk from homicide at each others' hands, when we are, generally, in a situation of crisis, we are in need of the insight and courage of such a person as Malcolm.

Unfortunately, Malcolm is not with us in the flesh, which means that many of us are having to get to know this man through others' impressions of him and their interpretations of his words. The problem with this is that not every person who portrays him or herself as some kind of "Malcolmologist" has sufficient integrity to deliver Malcolm to us in substantially "pure" form. It is as if we were thirsty for water, had none of our own, had not our own cups, and had both to drink the water of others and drink it from their cups. In drinking this water, we would find that some people's cups have the residue of fruit juices; some, the residue of liquor; some, the residue of other liquids. The water we would get would have tastes not altogether that of water. Our minds, like these cups, collect various residues--of information, ideas, etc.--which affect both the taste and substance of both what comes into them and what comes out.

Two people, having different backgrounds, having read literature and information from sources of differing perspectives, etc., can listen to the very same speech or read the very same interview in a newspaper or magazine and get very different impressions of what they've heard or read and give others very different interpretations of this material. This is especially true when the person whose words are heard or read makes use of allegorical language, which was the case with Malcolm. We

recall, for example, Malcolm's "chickens coming home to roost" response to the assassination of John Kennedy and Elijah Muhammad's subsequent 90-day suspension of him.

It is natural that a person's background, his or her reading of particular sources of information and ideas, and so forth affect his or her understanding of others' words and how he or she interprets such words in relaying/explaining them to other people. It is natural that a speaker's use of allegory leaves some of what he or she says open to some latitude in interpretation. But when you add to this the fact that some people lack honesty and integrity or/and are so blinded by certain allegiances that they can't distinguish rain from sunshine, we move from honest differences in interpretations and misinterpretations to a kind of sinister manipulation of people's words, history of events, and so forth.

When Malcolm was with us in the flesh, the Establishment media commonly quoted him out of context and used other tricks of the trade to discredit him in our eyes, to make him appear to be a hate-monger and a violence-prone racist. Now that we are in a period of time when we are in great need of courageous and insightful role models and leaders and many of us are looking to the spirit and ideas of Malcolm, there are African folks who are trying to popularize an image of Malcolm that would transform him, in death, into some kind of liberal reformer(albeit of strident tone) from the radical nationalist and pan-Africanist that he was in life. Some of these folks are trying to effect this transformation out of a sincere and innocent desire to counteract the Establishment media's distorted portrayal of Malcolm. Others, however, are motivated by their own assimilationist attitudes and allegiance to America's political/economic system, just as Malcolm's "house negro" had allegiance to his or her slave-master. These African folks see any acceptance on our part of

Malcolm's radicalism(belief in and espousal of fundamental change) as being both dangerous to their own self-perceived interests and as offensive to the sensibilities of Caucasian America.

Probably the most commonly used weapon of distortion of who Malcolm was that these folks have in their arsenal is the historical event of his trip to Mecca in April of 1964. It is undeniable that this event had a significant impact on Malcolm. We know, from Malcolm's own testimony, that the trip was responsible for his having to give reconsideration to the issues of: Caucasians as devils, the meaning of "black" nationalism, and what is the true substance of the religion of Islam. Of these three issues, it is the first which assimilationist and pro-Establishment Africans in the U.S. expend their greatest energy in their efforts to re-make Malcolm. There is another issue, one which the Mecca visit apparently caused Malcolm to have no second thoughts concerning, that of violence/self-defense, which these folks spend a lot of time talking about.

According to those who would transform Malcolm, his visit to Mecca changed him from one who had seen Caucasians in general as racists to one who simply saw them as people to be judged individually and from one who had advocated violence to a person dedicated to peaceful means of seeking change.

On the question of Malcolm's attitude about Caucasians, let us consider this statement made by Malcolm on December 1, 1963: "We want no integration with this wicked race that enslaved us. We want complete separation from this race of devils." At the time Malcolm made this remark, and several others in which he referred to the Caucasian as "the devil," he was still under the tutelage of Elijah Muhammad and was speaking for himself and spreading the official teachings of Elijah and the Nation of Islam. To speak of Caucasians as comprising a "race of devils" is to indict every

Caucasian man, woman, and child and to suggest that they are evil by nature. Malcolm had not only studied the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, however. He had read history and was quite familiar with the many crimes that had been committed against African people and other people of color by Caucasians. Inasmuch as the devil is symbolic of evil and there is no doubt that the many atrocities performed against people of color by Caucasians were/are evil, it was not amazing that Malcolm should have arrived at or agreed with the conclusion that Caucasians were devils.

But as we know, Malcolm visited Mecca and found men with white skin and blue eyes who seemed to treat him with a genuine sense of brotherhood, who seemed not to be racist. He was affected by this, but to what extent? The following is a passage from an address delivered by Malcolm on February 15, 1965 at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City: "Islam as the religion, as a religion, has nothing to do with color. There is no religion that has anything to do with color and Islam--as a religion, it doesn't use the color of a man's skin to measure him or as a yardstick. Islam, as a religion, judges a man by his intention, by his behavior, by his deeds. Now I can judge these crackers not 'cause they're white --I'm talking about them 'cause what they do. Do you understand? Anything you hear me say here about whitey, or the white man, is not because he's white--no, I'll shake his hand if he's allright. But first he got to get allright."

In the above passage, and in many other post-Mecca comments, Malcolm expresses a rejection of the idea that an entire people should be judged on the basis of their skin color. But this comment and many others clearly indicate that Malcolm did not cease to recognize the existence of racism among Caucasians generally.

Let us move to the question of violence or, more, accurately, the use of physical force in self-defense or in a people's efforts to overthrow their

(Cont. on p. 16)

EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization (parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. The FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any distinction between African people based solely on place of birth. References in the FLAME to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter "black" or other terms designating African people. This is our practice because we do not wish to diminish the integrity and authenticity of the articles we excerpt from.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (aka David Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems which address African folks' lives, the conditions we face, and our struggles to rise above those things which hinder us. We are not looking for poems which sacrifice power and beauty for the sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme. Send submissions to the editor c/o HARAMBEE FLAME; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502-0500.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Radio Station Surviving Racist Pressures

"The Black-owned radio station near Cleveland, Mississippi that earned the ire of local white merchants when it resisted economic pressure to stop airing taped lectures of Minister Louis Farrakhan, appears to have weathered the storm by dint of some powerful economic pressure of its own.

"But the African bishop who owns the station says that the battle is not over yet and that more help is needed from the Black community-at-large to assure the survival of (the) station...

"...Bishop Joseph Appiah, the Ghanaian clergyman and entrepreneur who owns WQAZ-PM in Boyle, refused to bow to the demands of nearly 300 white merchants who dropped their accounts with the station because of their dislike of the message of Minister Farrakhan. Instead, despite nearly daily threats against his life, he and a handful of local Black leaders went on the offensive by calling for 'economic sanctions' against white businesses that boycotted the station.

"...According to Bishop Appiah, Sunflower, Jitney Jungle, and Market Basket supermarkets, among others, have all resumed their advertisement accounts with the station since the call for sanctions went out over the airwaves to the Black listeners of Bolivar County and the surrounding Mississippi delta...

"In addition to the controversial Farrakhan broadcast, Bishop Appiah regularly airs Bob Law's 'Night Talk' a popular Black-oriented talk show that originates in New York City. And Bishop Appiah himself hosts a Tuesday night talk show that gives local listeners the opportunity to query local Black leaders and professionals on topics of interest to the community..."

-From "Battle Not Over, But Boycott Of Busines-

ses Gets Good Results," which appears on page 6 of the April 12 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, ILL)

Trial Approaching For African Convicted Of '82 Atlanta Child Murders

"...Five defense attorneys for (Wayne)Williams have been working on evidence for a year that they feel will implicate Ku Klux Klan members. They were preparing to file papers with Butts County Judge Hal Craig and request a new trial at FINAL CALL press time.

"Attorney William Kunstler said investigators withheld evidence showing that they were aware of a report from a reliable police informant that a Klan member threatened to kill one of the victims before he died.. The evidence was withheld, Kunstler said, because Atlanta feared that proof of Klan involvement might start a 'Black-white civil war'.

"Kunstler said an informant - called 'B.J.' - who worked with the Atlanta Police and infiltrated the home of a klansman who told him he was going to kill one Black child a month because they were angered over Atlanta electing a Black administration earlier in the 70s..."

-From "New Trial In Atlanta Child Murders Draws Near," which appears on page 41 of the April 12 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, ILL)

Africans And Other People Of Color Under Toxic Assault From Corporations

"...In New York City this month, angry West Harlem residents and City College students took to the streets, marching to demand that city and state officials correct the problem of toxic emissions from Manhattan's North River Sewage Treatment

Plant.

"Since the plant opened in 1986, residents of the predominantly African-American community have complained of foul odors, headaches, eye irritations and respiratory problems. According to neighborhood activists, the plant was built in Harlem after several of the borough's white communities rejected it.

"Meanwhile, other city neighborhoods of color are forming grass-roots organizations to battle pollution...

"The problem of environmental pollution in Third World neighborhoods takes on even greater dimensions when you add the fact 'that 90 percent of lead poisoning victims are Black and Hispanic children', said Liz Faulkner at a press briefing for the April 22 Earth Day 1990-NYC events...

"'Toxic Wastes And Race', the CRJ(Commission For Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ) report, cites race as 'a major factor related to the presence of hazardous wastes' in U.S. communities of color. The study, a two-pronged, year-long effort begun in 1986, examined demographic patterns associated with both commercial hazardous waste facilities and uncontrolled toxic waste sites.

"In the first instance the study revealed a striking relationship between government and corporate location of hazardous waste facilities--the Environmental Protection Agency term defining landfills or incinerators used to treat the dangerous by-products of industrial production--and race.

"Secondly, the study documented 'the widespread presence of uncontrolled toxic waste dumps'--closed and abandoned areas described by the EPA as posing a present and potential threat to human health and the environment--in African-American

and Latino communities throughout the country...

"Some of the study's more stunning findings reveal a flagrant pattern of government and corporate abuse in Third World communities:

-Puerto Rico is one of the most heavily polluted places in the world. The island's underground aquifers, for example, have been contaminated by massive discharges from pharmaceutical companies oil refineries and petrochemical plants...

-The predominantly African-American and Latino South Side of Chicago has the greatest concentration of hazardous waste sites in the nation.

-In Houston, six of the eight municipal incinerators and all five of the city's landfills are located in African-American neighborhoods.

-Pesticide exposure among farm workers--predominantly Lation and African-American--causes more than 300,000 pesticide-related illnesses each year...

-From "'Environmental Racism' Puts Toxics In Communities Of Color," which appears on page 5 of the April 25 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y., N.Y.)

Africans In Azania Also Face Toxic Menace

"...Investigations by Greenpeace have revealed that American Cyanamid, the sixth-largest chemical company in the U.S., has been shipping mercury wastes to a South African reprocessing plant. That plant, in turn, has allowed the mercury to contaminate the primary water supply for the black 'homeland' of KwaZulu...

"The wastes being dumped in South Africa originate at American Cyanamid's Bound Brook, N.J. plant, where the mercury catalyst is used in the production of rubber products. The highly toxic materi-

als are then exported to Thor Chemicals, a British -owned waste 'recycling' plant located in Cato Ridge in South Africa's Natal province. The plant is just outside the government-designated boundary of the KwaZulu bantustan.

"...U.S. mercury smelters will not handle organic-contaminated mercury wastes because of the severe environmental consequences of burning such materials...

"Samples of muddy water taken from a marsh behind Thor last November by St. Louis Post-Dispatch reporter Bill Lambrecht turned up mercury levels of 1,500 parts per million--one of the highest levels ever recorded. (Under U.S. law, anything over 0.2 parts per million is classified as a hazardous waste.)...

"While the South African Department of Water Affairs has temporarily closed Thor in response to the controversy, American Cyanamid has no plans to halt its toxic shipments. In fact it has announced that it intends to increase mercury waste exports in the coming year...

-From "Cyanamid Slips Mercury To South Africa," which appears on page 13 of the April 25 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y., N.Y.)

Nigeria Incorporates African-American Drama Into Its Theatre Scene

"For the better part of early 1989 Nigerian Theatre audiences were treated to an edifying rhapsody of such classics from the Black American stage as the ever so visceral and explosive DUTCHMAN by Amiri Baraka, HOME by Sam Art-Williams and Lorraine Hansberry's A RAISIN IN THE SUN during the much celebrated Festival of Black American Drama(FESBAD)...there was a call on the producer to consolidate the triumphant entree of the festi-

(Cont. on p. 12)

POETRY/STORY/GRAPHICS

FOR FYNECOUNTRY

Fynecountry,
Fine man,
Born in a fine country,
Took up a fine name.

Fynecountry,
Chief who was
Not installed,
But conducted his affairs chiefly,
In all spheres of life!

Baron at baking
And entrepreneurship,
We enjoyed you,
As we did Florine products,
Products, and even more
On Lagos roads -
Acrobat on wheels,
Disciplinarian, Abaji(Ocean).

A glimpse of you
Evoked shudders
From absent-minded
Motorists, who forgot
Their papers at home

Chief, who taught all
That even lowly starts
To greatness can be turned,
We shall remember you
For impeccability, warmth
And industry.
The eyes
Of the streets of Lagos
Watch over you,
On the other side.

Tunde Okanlawon

Dr. Tunde Okanlawon is a creative writer and journalist and a senior lecturer at Port Harcourt University in Nigeria.

val into the Nigerian Theatre-scene by making it an annual event...

"According to Chuck(Chuck Mike, the person behind the idea of Fesbad and a lecturer with the Drama Department of Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife), the American Theatre Revue(ATR), which would hold from mid February to May this year is part of a larger plan to develop and sustain a theatre-going audience in Nigeria with an immediate focus on its commercial capital: Nigeria...

"...the immediate purpose of the ATR is to further cultural exchange through a broad presentation of some of the best works from the American Theatre..

"...Chuck, who has founded a Theatre Company known as the Collective Artistes has selected a resplendent array of some of the leading Nigerian young artists in comtemporary English-language theatre for all the productions lined up for the Theatre Revue...

"The Revue opened February 15 with A RAISIN IN THE SUN..."

-From "Broadway Comes To Nigeria: A Lagos Festival Of American Theatre," which appears on page 21 of the March 15-21 NIGERIA HOMENEWS(London, England)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRISON LITERARY JOURNAL: "I am going to publish another literary journal comprised solely from the work of prisoners. It will include poetry, short fiction and art work. If you can help me contact men and women prisoners...and spread the word about this magazine I would greatly appreciate it...I just feel it would be a great outlet for those men and women behind bars because I know, I've been there. And now I'm in a position to help out." -Sean M. Hollick, 1600 Garden St., No. 25, Santa Barbara, CA 93101.

COMMEMORATION OF MALCOLM: Several activities are planned for May 18-20 in Omaha, Nebraska, the birthplace of Malcolm X. These activities are being put together by the National Malcolm X Commemoration Commission in Washington, D.C.; the Omaha-based Malcolm X Foundation,; and other groups.

On May 19, there will be a prayer service at the Malcolm X birth site at 3448 Pinkney. This will commence at 8:30 a.m. and will be followed by choral singing. Other activities are being planned for that location but have not been finalized. At the conclusion of these opening ceremonies, there will be a parade, which will begin at 24th & Lake and end at Horace Mann Junior High School, where there will be a proclamation ceremony designating May 19 as being a national day of commemoration of the life and ideas of Malcolm X.

Paying tribute to Malcolm and otherwise participating in the several functions which will take place May 18-20 will be a number of African folks from outside Nebraska, including Ron Daniels and other members of the National Malcolm X Commemoration Commission, some of Malcolm's relatives, Rev. Ben Chavis, and others.

BOOKS

THE ART OF LEADERSHIP by Oba T'Shaka(418 pp., Pan Afrikan Publ., 1990) sets out to give us insight and guidance with regard to leadership, as it relates to the ongoing struggle on the part of African people - in the U.S. in particular - for liberation. The book covers topics such as: guiding principles and qualities of leadership, establishment of a sense of African community, understanding the working of group dynamics, development of independent institutions, etc. This is a very important and easy to read work. It should be required for any African persons who seek to lead us.

AFRIKAN PEOPLE AND EUROPEAN HOLIDAYS: A MENTAL GENOCIDE by Rev. Ishakamusa Barashango(106 pp., IVth Dynasty Publ. Co., 1979) provides us with some very interesting - for many folks, shocking - information on events and developments leading up to the establishment of certain European and Euro-American holidays; specifically, Christmas and Thanksgiving. It also provides us with other historical background material. AFRIKAN PEOPLE, through both information and exhortation, encourages us to develop for ourselves and operate from an Afrocentric frame of reference and concludes, appropriately, with 25 pages of discussion about Kwanzaa.

GREAT AFRICAN THINKERS, VOL. I: CHEIKH ANTA DIOP, edited by Ivan Van Sertima(378 pp., Journal of African Civilizations, 1989), includes speeches and writings by and interviews with the late African physicist, historian, Egyptologist, and expert in other disciplines, Cheikh Anta Diop. Not only does this book give us a good look at Diop but at African history and European attempts at distortion of that history.

Pan Afrikan Publ., 4717 Wall Ave., Richmond, CA 94804; IVth Dynasty Publ. Co., 8401 Colesville Rd., Suite 208A, Silver Spring, MD 20910; Journal of African Civilizations, Ivan Van Sertima, African Stu. Dept./Beck Hall, Rutgers U., New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

BACK IN TIME

"During the Elizabethan Era the beginning of the British Empire began to take root by way of the exploitation and oppression of the inhabitants of India and the abusive genocidal designs on the indigenous inhabitants on the American continent commonly known as 'Indians'. Under the guidance of 'Good Queen Bess'...'the English came into Afrika on the heels of the Portuguese and became the most prolific slavers in modern history. In 1562 an Englishman, Sir John Hawkins who later was to win fame as a naval commander took 100 men in 3 ships, partly by sword and partly by other means, captured 300 Afrikans in northwest Afrika and carried them straight-way to the Spanish Islands of the west'... where they were literally worked to death in the tobacco, coffee, and cane fields being forced to labor twenty or more hours a day for months on end. This led to the establishment of the British East India Company(1600) and the accumulation of English economic wealth.

"The profits from slaving made by John Hawkins were so impressive that Elizabeth I became interested and provided as part of her investment a ship named the Jesus. According to Dr. Walter Rodney 'Hawkins left with the Jesus to steal some more Afrikans and returned to England with such dividends that Queen Elizabeth made him a knight. Hawkins chose as his coat-of-arms the representation of an Afrikan in chains.'"

Source: AFRIKAN PEOPLE AND EUROPEAN HOLIDAYS: A MENTAL GENOCIDE by Rev. Ishakamusa Barashango, p. 4

oppressors. In a speech given at the University of California on October 11, 1963, Malcolm stated: "We are not afraid to go to jail. We are not afraid to give our very life itself. And we're not afraid to take the lives of those who try to take our lives. We believe in a fair exchange. We believe in a fair exchange. An eye for an eye. A tooth for a tooth. A head for a head. and a life for a life. If this is the price of freedom, we won't hesitate to pay. the price."

Consider also these passages, again from his February 15, 1965 speech at the Audubon Ballroom; and be mindful of the fact that this was nearly a year after the Mecca visit. "You've got Klansmen knocking Black women down in front of a camera and that poor fool Black man standing on the sidelines because he's non-violent. Now, we don't go along with a thing like that...And once we are successful in uniting ourselves with our people all over the world, it puts us in a position. where we no longer are a minority who can be abused and walked upon. We become a part of the majority. And then if this man over here plays too rough, we have some brothers who can play as rough as he...But as long as you have someone coming in from the outside telling you how you should do it and how you shouldn't do it--and always what they tell you is non-violence, peaceful,. love everybody, forgive them Lord, they know not what they do. As long as you get into that kind of bag, why you'll never get anywhere."

Lest there be any lingering question about whether Malcolm might have been changed by his experience in Mecca into a pacifist, look at these final two remarks from the February 15 address: "You need to study guerrilla warfare. There's nothing wrong with saying that. Yes, it's good to know everything. There's nothing wrong with knowing that. Why the government teaches you that. They draft you to teach you that, don't they? Sure, they

taught it to your son. Well go on and teach it to your son. But then tell your son how to use it." And, finally, "Never turn the other cheek until you see the white man turn his cheek."

Before Malcolm's murder, he was in the process of refining his thoughts on a number of issues. For example, he was rethinking what he meant by "black nationalism." And while he was clearly opposed to capitalism and viewed it as being intrinsically tied to racism, he apparently did not arrive at a clear vision of the kind of economic system he would propose or seek to be developed. Malcolm had one of the most crucial qualites of leadership--the ability and willingness to constantly question assumptions and explore new ideas. And we have to keep this in mind when we read and/or listen to Malcolm's recorded speeches and interviews. But in keeping this in mind, we should not presume to know where Malcolm's evolution might have taken him and should beware of those who would put words into Malcolm's mouth in order to make him fit the image they prefer--for whatever reasons.

Editor's note: MALCOLM X: THE LAST SPEECHES, edited by Bruce Perry, was the source for the quotes contained in this editorial.

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